GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5292
ANSWERED ON:06.04.2017
Arsenic and Fluoride in Ground Water
Ajmal Maulana Badruddin

Will the Minister of DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware about large-scale arsenic and fluoride contamination in ground water in North East Region including Assam affecting lakhs of people; and
(b) if so, the measures/steps taken to provide safe drinking water for already affected people and to protect future generations?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION
(SHRI RAMESH CHANDAPPA JIGAJINAGI)

(a) Number of habitations and population affected by fluoride and arsenic contamination in ground drinking water sources in North East Region including Assam as reported by the States into Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) of the Ministry as on 31th March, 2017 is at Annexure.

(b) Rural drinking water supply is a state subject. This Ministry supplements the efforts of the States by providing them with technical and financial assistance through the centrally sponsored National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) for improving the coverage of safe drinking water to rural population. It is the State Governments who plan, design, execute and operate schemes for providing safe drinking water.
Under NRDWP, States can utilize upto 67% of funds released to them for provision of safe drinking water in water quality affected habitations with priority to arsenic and fluoride affected habitations. States may like to set up community water purification systems as a short/medium term measure for immediate provision of safe drinking water as powers to plan, design, implement and monitor water supply projects including water treatment plants has been delegated to them. Further, 5% of the NRDWP funds are earmarked for Water Quality and allocated to those States with habitations affected by excess chemical contamination and with high priority districts affected by Japanese Encephalitis/Acute Encephalitis Syndrome.
During 2016-17 Government of Assam has been provided an amount of Rs. 32.50 Crore under the World Bank assisted Rural Water Supply & Sanitation projects −Low Income States (RWSSP-LIS).
States have been asked to focus on providing piped water supply schemes from safe and perennial surface water source in water quality affected habitations. As immediate measures, Assam State has been provided an amount of Rs. 11.57 Crores in Mar 2016 as 100% grant by Government of India on the recommendation of NITI Aayog to provide 8-10 litres per capita per day of safe drinking water in arsenic and fluoride affected habitations for drinking and cooking purposes, as short term measures through Community Water Purification Plants.
The Ministry has formulated a National Water Quality Sub-Mission for focussed funding ring fenced only to arsenic and fluoride rural population on 90:10 for North-Eastern & Himalayan States preferably through surface water based piped water supply schemes. Under this program, Rs. 45.17 Crore have been released to Assam State to complete 117 ongoing schemes.